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Eccentric in Bush threat held

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John North Wright of Lansing, charged Friday for threatening the life of Vice President George Bush, has been well-known for several years to local news people and police as an eccentric who claimed he was in "telepathic contact" with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Wright, 39, of 2600 Maplewood, also claimed to be the victim of a CIA "mind-control" experiment and that the intelligence agency was trying to kill him because he "knew too much."

Wright, whose occupation is unknown, was arraigned Friday in U.S. District Court at Grand Rapids on two felony counts, verbally threatening Bush's life and possession of two firearms after a previous felony conviction for possession of a concealed weapon, court officials said Friday.

WRIGHT, who asked for a court-appointed lawyer, demanded preliminary examination. U.S. Magistrate Hugh Brennehan set April 24 as the examination date and bond at \$30,000. Wright was taken to Kent County Jail after failing to post bond.

If convicted, Wright faces a maximum sentence of one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine on the verbal threat charge and five years and \$5,000 on the firearms possession charge.

Bush was in Washington, D.C., Thursday night and Friday.

Wright's obsession with the "telepathic CIA" was a major factor in his arrest Thursday afternoon by the Secret Service for threatening the life of Bush, who was CIA director for one year starting January 1976.

EARLIER, Wright had threatened to kill WLS general manager Susan Harvey, Harvey's family, as well as Bush, the radio manager told police. Harvey was unavailable for comment Friday.

After Harvey called police, Lansing policeman Danny King interviewed Wright at his home and then notified the FBI and the Secret Service of the threats against Bush.

After questioning by federal agents, Wright was taken into custody and transported to Grand Rapids. The agents also confiscated a rifle with a telescopic sight and a handgun from Wright's address. Lansing police said.

According to Lansing police records, Wright quickly locked the door after letting King in because he was afraid the CIA was "trying to kill" him. Asked by King why the CIA would kill him, Wright said "because I know too much."

Then Wright allegedly said he "would kill everyone who tried to blackmail" him. Asked who was trying to kill him, Wright allegedly answered, "George Bush."

KING ASKED if Wright meant George Bush, the vice president. Wright acknowledged Bush was vice president, but added, "I did not say that" and then began talking about unidentified flying objects, the records stated.

Wright has made similar threats against other public officials in the past, Lansing Police Sgt. Irv Ruby said.

"This guy gets picked up every time a dignitary comes to town, or we go sit on him," Ruby said. "I think he is capable of doing what he says," Ruby said.

Known for entering newsrooms in anger, Wright received his greatest media exposure in the former Lansing Star newspaper in a series about the telepathic CIA under the byline, "Dr. Kabbalah," in 1975.

Star officials said Friday they published the articles as fiction, but Wright evidently thought they were printed as news. Wright also advertised his two 1979 books, "Dr. Kabbalah Vs. The Telepathic CIA" and "Dr. Kabbalah Studies The Telepathic CIA," in the Star.

Wright also made frequent visits to the Lansing State Journal, presenting reporters with "evidence" that he had been subjected to CIA mind-control experiments.

The Port Huron Times-Herald was also on Wright's media visitation rounds. Wright said he grew up in Port Huron and attended Port Huron Junior College, now St. Clair Community College, in 1963 where he was considered a brilliant student. Little is known about Wright's whereabouts between 1963 and 1976.